

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method facilitating deployment of volume-based network policies across a computer network, the method comprising ~~the steps of:~~

monitoring, over a given time interval, an ~~[[the]]~~ aggregate volume of data transfer corresponding to each user of a plurality of users, wherein the given time interval spans at least one week;

detecting, for a first user in the plurality of users, a network utilization milestone, wherein the network utilization milestone occurs when, within the given time interval, the aggregate volume of data transfer associated with the first user crosses a threshold; and

allowing but degrading, only with respect to a predefined subset of traffic types, the network access provided to the first user identified in the detecting step affecting a characteristic associated with the network access provided to the first user identified in the detecting step.

2. – 4. (canceled)

5. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising ~~wherein the affecting step comprises the step of:~~

charging the first user identified in the detecting step for further network access.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising ~~the step of~~ notifying the first user when the aggregate volume of data transfer associated with the first user approaches the threshold.
7. (previously amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the detecting step comprises comparing the aggregate number of transferred bytes associated with the first user over the given time interval against a threshold level defining the network utilization milestone.
8. (canceled)
9. (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 4~~ A method facilitating deployment of volume-based network policies across a computer network, the method comprising:  
monitoring, over a given time interval, an aggregate volume of data transfer corresponding to each user of a plurality of users, wherein the given time interval spans at least one week;  
detecting, for a first user in the plurality of users, a network utilization milestone, wherein the network utilization milestone occurs when, within the given time interval, the aggregate volume of data transfer associated with the first user crosses a threshold;  
and  
denying further network access to the first user identified in the detecting step  
~~wherein network access is denied~~ only with respect to a predefined subset of traffic

types.

10. (original) The method of claim 1 wherein the monitoring step is performed only with respect to a predefined set of traffic types.

11. (currently amended) A method facilitating deployment of volume-based network policies across a computer network, the method comprising ~~the steps of~~

monitoring, over a given time interval, an ~~[[the]]~~ aggregate volume of data transfer corresponding to each user of a plurality of users within a given time interval, wherein the aggregate volume of data transfer characterizes the volume of data corresponding to past and current data flows over the given time interval, and wherein the given time interval spans at least one week;

detecting, for a first user in the plurality of users, a network utilization milestone, wherein the network utilization milestone occurs when, within the given time interval, the aggregate volume of data transfer associated with the first user crosses a threshold; and,

~~denying affecting~~, for the remainder of the time interval, further network access only with respect to a predefined subset of traffic types ~~a characteristic associated with the network access provided to the first user identified in the detecting step.~~

12. (canceled)

13. (currently amended) The method of claim 11 further comprising ~~wherein the affecting step comprises the step of:~~

degrading the network access provided to the first user identified in the detecting step.

14. (canceled)

15. (currently amended) The method of claim 11 further comprising ~~wherein the affecting step comprises the step of:~~

charging the first user identified in the detecting step for further network access.

16. (previously amended) The method of claim 11 further comprising the step of notifying the first user when the aggregate volume of data transfer associated with the first user approaches the threshold.

17. (previously amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the detecting step comprises

comparing the aggregate number of transferred bytes associated with the first user over a given time interval against a threshold level defining the network utilization milestone.

18. (original) The method of claim 17 wherein the time interval is a fixed time interval.

19. (original) The method of claim 17 wherein the time interval is a sliding time interval.

20. -21. (canceled)

22. (previously amended) The method of claim 11 wherein the monitoring step is performed only with respect to a predefined set of traffic types.

23. (currently amended) A method facilitating deployment of volume-based network policies across a computer network, the method comprising the steps of

registering a user at a network access device connected to a first computer network, the network access device including an IP address;

associating the IP address with the user;

providing the user access to a second computer network by changing the configuration of a network device in a communication path between the first computer network and the second computer network;

monitoring, over a given time interval, an [[the]] aggregate volume of data transfer associated with the IP address, wherein the given time interval spans at least one week;

detecting a network utilization milestone based on the aggregate volume of data transfer within the given time interval associated with the IP address relative to a threshold;

changing the configuration of the network device to allow, but degrade ~~affect a characteristic associated with~~ access to the second network provided to the user only with respect to a predefined subset of traffic types.

24. (currently amended) An apparatus facilitating the deployment of volume-based

network policies across a first computer network, the first computer network comprising at least one traffic monitoring device operative to monitor the volume of network traffic generated by individual users, and at least one network control device operative to control access to a second computer network, comprising

a user account database maintaining [[the]] respective aggregate volumes of data transfer corresponding to each user of a plurality of users;

a data logging module operative to collect the aggregate volume of data transfer within a given time interval for the plurality of users collected data in the user account database, wherein the given time interval spans at least one week;

a network usage monitor operative to:

scan the user account database to detect, for a first user in the plurality of users, a network utilization milestone reached by the first user based on the aggregate volume of data transfer associated with the first user in relation to a threshold and the given time interval, and

modify the configuration of the network control device to allow affect a characteristic of access to the second computer network for the first user only as to a predefined subset of network traffic types.

25. (original) The apparatus of claim 24 further comprising a user interface module operative to register new users and create corresponding user accounts in the user account database.

26. (original) The apparatus of claim 25 wherein the apparatus, in response to registration of a new user, is operative to modify the configuration of the network

control device to allow access to the second computer network for the new user.

27. – 32. (canceled)

33. (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the given time interval spans one month.

34. (previously presented) The method of claim 11 wherein the given time interval spans one month.

35. (previously presented) The method of claim 23 wherein the given time interval spans one month.

36. (previously presented) The apparatus of claim 24 wherein the given time interval spans one month.

37. (canceled)